

Eastmont Middle School 10100 South 1300 East Sandy, Utah 84094

March 15-16, 2007



Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Eastmont Middle School 10100 South 1300 East Sandy, Utah 84094

March 15-16, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 15-16, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Eastmont Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Janice Sterzer is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Eastmont Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Eastmont Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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D 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Superintendent
	Deputy Superintendent for Business Services
	Deputy Superintendent for Instructional Services
	Alta K-12 Feeder System
	Brighton K-12 Feeder System
June LeMaster, Executive Director	
Kerrie Naylor, Executive Director	Bingham K-12 Feeder System
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Randy Haslam, Director	
	Transportation
Herb Jensen, Director	
	Accounting, Budgets and Audits
	Accountability and Program Services
	Insurance Services
	Information Systems
	Jordan Education Foundation
	Special Education
<i>U</i> ,	

EASTMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

James Ruesch		PrincipalAssistant PrincipalAssistant Principal			
Counseling					
-					
Support Staff					
Suzanne Bailey Mary Bell Nicki Bodine Kat Clark Thayne Gates Lynnette Gurr Bruce Harrison Jennifer Heaney Trudy Holt Steve Horrocks Cindy Johnson Christina Kohlburn Kasey Lauritzen Roy Maucher Juli Mehr Terry Nesheim Cindy Szugye		Attendance Aide Head Secretary ISS Aide Counseling Center Aide ISS Aide ISS Aide Head Custodian Copy Center Aide Lead Custodian Special Education Team Leader Attendance Secretary Media Center Coordinator Media Center Aide School Psychologist Counseling Center Aide Custodian Office Aide Custodian Counseling Center Aide Custodian Counseling Center Aide			
Faculty					
Carrie Anderson Amy Bateman Cindy Benton	Michael Bryner Mike Campos Harvey Colby	Jay Critchlow Dolores Croxford Kathleen Franke			

Angie Freer Russell Fullmer Jessica Gainer Martine Hales Michelle Hall Stewart Hewlett Margaret Jensen Joseph Karlsven MaryAnn Klimaj Emily Kunz Dennis Lombardi
Dean Lowe
Margot McCallum
Carolyn McPharlin
Michelle Moon
Anne Mortensen
Rose Reagan
Elizabeth Rigby
Sherri Riley
Michelle Schmidt

Jennifer Sinclair Jodee Steffensen Alaina Stone Howard Summers Bret Thomas Nic Van Dyken Ingrid White Aria Wood Lisa Young

EASTMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Eastmont Middle School is to provide students with the competencies required to further their education and to function with self-confidence in a global society.

The competencies we speak of are those behaviors and skills identified in our Desired Results of Student Learning as well as competencies identified by employers as necessary for future success in the work place. They also include the knowledge and skills gained through instruction of the standards outlined in the State Core Curriculum.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We Believe:

- All students can learn given the appropriate opportunities for success
- A variety of instructional approaches should be provided to address the many ways in which students learn
- Curriculum and instructional practices should incorporate a variety of learning activities and assessments to accommodate different learning styles
- Students learn best when actively engaged in the learning
- The school should provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes student learning
- It is the responsibility of the school to educate students to become resourceful thinkers, effective communicators, responsible citizens, and life-long learners
- It is the responsibility of the school to not only educate, but to model and teach values that will enable students to become productive members of the community
- Students, teachers, parents, and the community should work collaboratively in making school related decisions

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Verneita R. Hunt, Crestview School, Granite School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Joanne Fraser, Scott M. Matheson Junior High School, Granite School District
Carol Greenwood, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis School District
Barry Jones, South Ogden Junior High School, Weber School District
Travis Lemon, American Fork Junior High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

EASTMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Situated in the eastern area near the foot of the Wasatch Mountain Range, Eastmont Middle School is one of fifteen middle schools in the Jordan School District. Designed and built as a three-level building to accommodate 1,200 students, the school opened in 1973 at a cost of just over five million dollars. The facility was completely remodeled from 1997-1999.

Marlin A. Fairbourn, the school's first principal, opened Eastmont as a junior high serving grades 7, 8, and 9. With a change of educational philosophy to the middle school concept, the sixth grade students were moved to the middle school and the ninth graders to the high school in fall, 1979. Because of financial and population demographics, Jordan School District was forced to change the school's configuration back to the original grade divisions; at present, Eastmont Middle School serves grades 7, 8, and 9 using the middle school philosophy.

Since Mr. Fairbourn, there have been five principals at Eastmont: Glayde Hill, J. J. Tullow, Catherine Jensen, Anne White, and the present principal, Janice Sterzer. Assistant Principals have been Talmage Taylor, Craig Sudbury, Reed Thatcher, Tom Hicks, Sherril Taylor, William R. Evans, Jim Marsh, Sharon Souter, Audrey Wells, Kenneth L. Van Ausdal, Nedra Sproul, Marc Sowa, and the current assistant principals, Jim Reusch and Christy Waddell.

Eastmont has housed as many as 1,640 students and as few as 930; the current student body comes from a diversified and varied socioeconomic background.

Visitors are welcomed to Eastmont Middle School in a friendly, caring atmosphere. The building is attractive and well kept. Showcases lining the hallways are filled with pictures of specially honored students. The hallways also show off student art and other work.

In the 1983-84 school year, Eastmont Middle School won the Bell Recognition Award for Outstanding Progress toward Excellence in Education. The current teachers continue this rich tradition by using curricula focused on student interests, with instructional practices and experiences spearheaded by professional development.

One innovative instructional practice implemented in 1999 is Technology SmartLabTM. SmartLab is a departure from the ordinary in that it serves as a catalyst for educational reform. It is designed for students who will become the consumers, leaders, and citizens of the future. Specialized jobs that exist today may be gone tomorrow; technological and critical thinking skills will be more in demand. In the Technology SmartLab, teams of

students gather for projects, problem solving, and skill development through cognitive, psychomotor, and social learning. The lab is an integrated learning environment that incorporates hands-on activities, cross-curricular integration, and conceptual learning. Students are challenged to become proficient in documenting, analyzing, predicting test results, and developing relationships between the lab activities and real-world applications.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The Visiting Team found that the enrollment at Eastmont Middle School has decreased an average of 4.5 percent per year from 2003 to 2006. The enrollment leveled off with the 2006-2007 school year. This statistic was of concern to the staff as well as the Visiting Team. The school profile reports that the decline in population is due in part to the aging of the community, and to students choosing to attend different schools in closer proximity to their homes. This loss to other schools is also attributable to longstanding tradition within certain neighborhoods, and the attractiveness of honors programs.

The Visiting Team also found that the school was honest in its disaggregated data for state testing of students for the past recent years. When test scores were disaggregated by ethnic group, they found that Asian and Caucasian students scored above the school averages, and Pacific Islander students scored lower in language arts but were above school averages in math and science. The Hispanic students scored lower in math and science. The accreditation process has helped in disseminating this information to the staff; therefore, the staff is creating goals to help all students score higher in language arts, math, and science.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team found Eastmont Middle School's profile to be very adequate, with information that spanned all areas. The profile had good data, with charts and written explanations of said data. The department and focus group reports gave the Visiting Team sufficient information as to begin the site visit.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The school profile should describe how the mission, beliefs, and desired results for student learning (DRSLs) were created, including who was involved.
- Eastmont Middle School developed an action plan with five goals. The goals include action steps, responsible persons, applicable professional development, timelines, estimated resources, and assessment. There should be further clarification of the latter two goals.

• The school profile should include a brief history of the school.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The Visiting Team found through interviews with teachers, staff members, parents, and administrators that the there was an extensive effort to include all stakeholders in the self-study process. Focus groups and department committees met many times over the last two years, working through the accreditation procedure, including school profile data in all areas.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The Visiting Team found that the focus groups and department committees used the school profile data to analyze strengths and limitations. The groups were thorough and knew areas of growth and areas for continued examination. In each of the focus and department reports in the school profile there were strengths and limitations listed, along with recommendations from each group. These recommendations were directly related to the action plan goals that the teachers, staff, community, and administration worked together to create.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Eastmont Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

Resourceful Thinker

Demonstrates problem-solving skills using effective strategies Makes thoughtful judgments and justifies conclusions Accesses, evaluates and applies information

Implementation

The Resourceful Thinker DRSL can be measured through examinations like the CRTs, Direct Writing Assessments (DWAs) and other standardized tests, by curriculum and department grading profiles, students projects, student performance-based assessment, student portfolios and exhibitions.

The resourceful thinker DRSL can be addressed through:

- 1. Class discussions
- 2. Research projects
- 3. Problem solving through application of problem-solving skills
- 4. Learning to critique the work of others constructively
- 5. Debating various viewpoints
- 6. Being involved in persuasive writing and speaking
- 7. Using individual creativity and imagination
- 8. Learning to determine the credibility of information
- 9. Learning how to ask questions and whom to approach of help

Effective Communicator

Writes with clarity, purpose and understanding of audience Presents information orally in an effective manner Reads and comprehends a variety of written materials Uses effective listening skills

Implementation

The effective communicator DRSL can be measured through examining standardized test scores, curriculum and department grading profiles, student projects, student performance-based assessments, student portfolios and exhibitions.

The Effective communicator DRSL can be addressed through:

- 1. Oral presentations
- 2. PowerPoint presentations
- 3. Group projects
- 4. The use of graphing calculators to graph data and make predictions based on that data
- 5. Communicating feelings or emotions through movement
- 6. Students evaluating each other' performances
- 7. Proofs in math statements in writing on how to solve problems and orally defend that proof
- 8. Expressing ideas through music
- 9. Expressing ideas through displays
- 10. Participation in drama

Responsible Citizen

Demonstrates personal integrity

Respects self, others and property

Recognizes and respects diversity and differences in others

Assumes responsibility for personal actions

Exhibits a civic conscience

Implementation

The responsible citizen DRSL is measured by participation in activities that improve the quality of life for self and others, and through participation in charitable, accountable and respectful behaviors such as: honesty, environmental awareness and self motivation.

The responsible citizen DRSL can be addressed through work on:

- 1. Turning in assignments in a timely manner
- 2. Coming prepared to class on time
- 3. Staying on task-using class time effectively
- 4. Being responsible to get make up work
- 5. Promoting a positive environment by keeping personal space clean in classrooms, halls and in the lunchroom

Lifelong Learner

Sets and works to achieve positive goals Applies knowledge and experience to everyday life Develops skill in working effectively with others Gains basic skills in the use of technology

Implementation

The lifelong learner DRSL is measured by students and parent surveys, SEOP completion, student initiative projects and assessing the effectiveness of human dynamics groups directed by the guidance counselors.

The lifelong learner DRSL can be addressed through:

- 1. Setting and carrying out personal goals
- 2. Developing a positive work ethic
- 3. Persevering in difficult situations
- 4. Talking about how content areas relate to careers
- 5. Applying real life situations to class activities
- 6. Understanding deadlines and their consequences

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

Eastmont Middle School has developed a mission statement that defines the purpose and direction of the school. Most faculty members were involved at some point in the development of this mission statement. The mission statement is aligned with the DRSLs and supports the expectations of employers and the State Core Curriculum.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

Eastmont Middle School's belief statements include an important collective commitment of the faculty to student learning and achievement. The belief statements demonstrate that the faculty members have an awareness of whom they serve and how best to increase learning for their students. The Visiting Team commends the work that has gone into creating the belief statements, mission statement, and DRSLs. The Visiting Team encourages the faculty to keep the mission and belief statements in the forefront and in action. It would be well to involve students in this process.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The Visiting Team found strong evidence that there is clear alignment among the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The faculty and staff met on several occasions to discuss the process and the purpose for creating DRSLs. Then they came to a consensus on the DRSLs and indicators. Throughout the process of creating and refining the DRSLs, the faculty members were able to examine themselves and reflect on what they truly believe to be best for students, teachers, staff, and the community. The belief statements came naturally out of the work on the DRSLs and clearly define the school's support of academics and conviction that academics are a lifelong process. The Visiting Team observed the DRSLs posted in the classrooms, where students are reminded of these skills. The students also demonstrated an awareness of the DRSLs; a majority can recite them and are beginning to value them.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The Visiting Team found a focus on curriculum development at Eastmont Middle School that is clearly based on the Utah State Core Curriculum. The DRSLs, which are clearly posted in every classroom, align to the Utah Life Skills, and these also guide the development of the curriculum.

The Visiting Team observed that teachers make effective use of student planners. Information concerning the day's lesson, and often the schedule for the week, is posted for students to copy into their planners. The Visiting Team found that, as a result of the accreditation process, the departments now hold meaningful meetings to evaluate effective incorporation of the Core Curriculum into lesson planning.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The Visiting Team found that collaboration has begun within departments by grade level at Eastmont Middle School. Cross-curricular collaboration is being explored, and some successful experiences have occurred between the social studies and language arts teachers. The use of some common assessments has been implemented school-wide. It is recommended that teachers continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the common assessment tools, and refine them to accurately evaluate the learning focus within the department. The Visiting Team commends the emphasis the staff has placed on examining the data collected, and the commitment to determine how teachers can address the needs of students who are falling behind in their achievement.

The DRSLs and mission statement of Eastmont Middle School address student competence and ability to function in a variety of learning environments and real-world situations. The Visiting Team discovered in conversation with teachers that these ideas truly motivate the teachers' efforts in curriculum development.

The implementation of the action plan will further enhance the teachers' efforts to provide a quality education for all students.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The Visiting Team observed a variety of learning experiences in the classrooms. The teaching staff used student journals, self-paced learning modules, written reports, class discussion, performance tasks, and direct instruction. It was apparent to the Visiting Team that teachers have diligently sought strategies that engage students in this age group. Expectations for student learning in the classroom are high. Students are rewarded both verbally and tangibly for their participation. The Visiting Team recommends that professional development in this area continue to be a priority, and that action steps be implemented to create even stronger instructional practices in all classrooms.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The Visiting Team observed teachers making accommodations within their classroom for student needs. Clear and explicit instructions were written as well as orally explained. Assessment of student understanding was done in both oral

and written formats. Whenever possible the instruction was tied to real-life experiences, with students expressing their own reflections and ideas.

The Visiting Team learned through student interviews that students appreciate the careful planning and preparation of their teachers. "We have great teachers here who help us learn," was a sentiment expressed by many students.

In conversation with focus group leaders, the Visiting Team heard reports of increased collaboration between special education and regular education teachers. This collaboration has proved both insightful and instructive, with both sides benefiting from the different perspectives and educational approaches.

The Visiting Team commends the members of the teaching staff for their efforts to design data-driven instruction, and it is recommended that efforts to collect and analyze data continue to be refined to show student growth as a result of strategic teaching practices.

The Visiting Team encourages the teaching staff to continue meaningful collegial discussions in which best practices are shared and encouraged. It is also recommended that the teaching staff continue to research "best practices" instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students, including high ability, ELL, and special needs students.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The Instructional Design Focus Group provided information about tutorial programs for students at Eastmont Middle School. The Enrichment sessions and Study Skills provide students with the opportunity to make up work and complete assignments with teacher supervision before or after school. The Math and Science Lab also provides one-on-one instruction for specific assignments or review of concepts.

The Visiting Team understands the commitment of the faculty and staff to increasing student achievement.

The Visiting Team commends the counselors for their diligence in monitoring atrisk students and personally visiting with each of these students to offer encouragement and additional counseling as needed.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The Visiting Team found that, other than assessments based on a product or performance, there seems to be limited variety of assessments used—for instance, classroom tests, quizzes, and ultimately grades. Alternative assessments seem to be designed and implemented in some classes. It is apparent, from the quality of student work displayed in classrooms and throughout the school, that students are aware of high standards for work and strive to reach them in their projects and assignments.

There are limited school-wide or departmental standards governing the development of classroom assessment tools, other than making Criterion-Referenced Tests the guide for expected content mastery. The Eastmont staff is aware of the need for such assessment, and has set a goal to analyze the effectiveness and appropriateness of assessments.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The Visiting Team observed assessment to be in line with the State Core Curriculum. Teachers are working to assist students in being successful on endof-level tests. Students indicated that, for the most part, items to be assessed are well communicated. Some teachers provide pre-tests and practice tests, as well as study guides to help communicate expectations and standards to students. There is work to be done in creating common assessments, and the faculty is very aware of the value of doing this. The faculty will benefit from working to create and use common assessments in their content areas and with the DRSLs on a schoolwide level. The Visiting Team encourages the faculty to pursue the recommendations of the Quality Assessment Focus Group to incorporate portfolios and rubrics, as well as alternative assessments. The Visiting Team also recommends analyzing the DRSL indicators to determine how indicators can be measured and in what ways data can be collected to measure the effectiveness of efforts to teach the DRSLs to the students. School-wide collaboration will need to continue so that teachers can be efficient and effective as they work to determine how best to instruct and assess students.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

The Visiting Team acknowledges the frustrations expressed by the Special Education Department when using state tests; students are assessed on grade level rather than instructional level at the end of the year, regardless of their ability. The Visiting Team also observed the teachers in the special education classes working to effectively provide equitable assessments to all. The Visiting Team observed some common assessments and active performance assessments. The faculty is aware of the need to assess in alternative ways, and should continue the pursuit of professional development in this area.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

Eastmont Middle School has an established record of excellence in academics. Current data verifies this record; the school's scores in almost every area of the Iowa Test of Educational Development are above average state and district levels, as are its scores on the state Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) at the end of the school year. The school has disaggregated its scores and is well aware of various subgroups' needs in the different curricular areas.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The Visiting Team has observed the school has, based upon the data, chosen literacy as one of the goals for school-wide focus and made it a part of the action plan. The faculty chose and read the text *I Read It But I Still Don't Get It* as a focus to begin the collaborative process for this goal. A majority of the faculty members (thirty of forty-one teachers) attended the Middle Level Association's conference this year, where they school received special training in the teaming process.

The faculty has been trained in Six Traits of Writing and is striving to incorporate writing across the curriculum. This emphasis is a result of the Direct Writing Assessment of ninth grade students. This is a definite attempt to employ data-driven, research-based, and collaborative best practices school-wide and across curricula.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The Visiting Team observed that the faculty members have recognized that their grades in some areas seem a bit inflated in relation to the students' performance on state and national assessments. In their self-evaluation, they have indicated an intention to "look carefully at grade distribution in the math and science courses to make sure that the grades being awarded are not misleading students and their parents regarding student mastery of material in these areas."

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The Visiting Team observed that the school has achieved a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. The custodial staff members need to be

commended for their efforts to maintain a school of which the students, parents, and faculty are extremely proud.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The Visiting Team observed that the school is in the process of creating a state-of-the-art computer lab in the library/media center to be used by the faculty and students. This aligns with their goal to "implement a diagnostic tool to identify the reading level of all students." They are searching for a "computer-supported remediation program for the lowest performing students."

In visiting with the cafeteria staff and some of the custodial staff, there were concerns expressed regarding the students' level of responsibility as citizens within the cafeteria, one of the school's DRSLs. The Visiting Team made a special effort to visit during lunch, and feel that this is a perception problem. It was our observation that the students' behavior was extremely appropriate during our two-day observation. The students' perception that their lunch lines are excessively long was also not verified. An opportunity to visit other cafeterias might enlighten the students and staff on just how good they have it at Eastmont Middle School.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The Visiting Teams' impression from the parents (both PTSA and Community Council members) is they feel a strong commitment to their school with Patriot Pride. They feel the principal is very open to their discussions and actively seeks their input in decisions that affect their students. The parents appreciate the transition process from elementary to middle school, and want to see this new process continued. The parents feel their children have more of a connection to the school through the visit to the school prior to the students' attendance.

The parents are very committed to the anti-bullying program that has been adopted at one of the local elementary schools, and want to continue this ambassador program at the middle school. The parents' perception and the students' perception of the bullying problem at the school are different from each other. The students feel very safe at school, expressing that "upper classmen are kind and helpful to lower classmen."

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team recognizes the positive and productive relationship that exists among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. There is strong evidence that the school is creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The students feel they have some of the best and most caring teachers in the area. They also feel that teachers truly care about them as individuals and want them to succeed.

The Visiting Team feels that the school is putting more emphasis on collaboration from within and throughout other departments, but the Visiting Team feels that the school needs to continue putting in the effort and the time necessary for more collaboration throughout the school.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The Visiting Team found that the school is reaching out to the community more than it has done in the past several years, and recommends continuing the process. Parents—Community Council and PTSA members—stated that the administration is very receptive to parent concerns and that the lines of communication are always open. Parents feel that teachers care about their children and are willing to do what it takes to help them succeed.

The Visiting Team observed a working relationship among the middle school, elementary school, high school, and community, embracing community functions and fundraisers and even offering counseling services to the community.

<u>Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:</u>

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The Visiting Team found that the administration, teachers, and staff members are committed to the improvement of the school through student achievement. The school's actions plan addresses several areas for improvement, and each of the action goals deals with developing and training teachers. Many of the recent workshops and professional development activities have supported areas of continued growth for staff members. The action plan has many steps directed toward professional development. The teachers really feel that time and money need to be priorities in this process.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The Visiting Team found that the administration is working to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. The administration fully supports the faculty, and the faculty appears to fully support the administration. Most of the teachers and staff are very supportive and praise the changes that have happened at Eastmont, but some are a little resistant to change and need to be brought along in the process.

The Visiting Team commends the administration on providing a climate of support for continuous change and improvement, and on its commitment to continue to improve and increase its effectiveness in working with teachers, students, and staff.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The Visiting Team found a great deal of evidence that the school-wide action plan is in complete alignment with the data and school profile findings. During the accreditation visit it was observed that teachers referred to the data collected and analyzed (such as was found in the school profile). Two main goals, regarding literacy and numeracy, stood out in the profile and in the evidence found during the visit with personnel and community members at the school.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The Visiting Team found strong evidence from teachers, staff, administrators, and parents that they were committed to the process of accreditation through self-study. When asked what the next step for the school would be, they repeated over

and over that the school community would address the action plan goals, follow through with the action steps, revisit school data several times a year, continue to analyze data collected, and revise action steps as needed to ultimately and positively affect student achievement.

Teachers were also committed to collaboration among team members and to starting the process of cross-curricular collaboration. Evidence was found that some cross-curricular instruction already existed within classrooms.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?

Eastmont Middle School's principal is one of the positive driving forces that will continue to motivate teachers and staff toward school improvement in literacy, numeracy, and student achievement. The principal's enthusiasm and great vision for Eastmont's future have permeated the faculty, staff, and community. They are broadening their own vision for Eastmont's students, and thus creating a culture of continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Eastmont Middle School's faculty, staff, and community for their tremendous efforts over the past couple of years to work through the accreditation process—compiling the data, organizing the school profile, analyzing the information, and creating an action plan that will benefit students.
- The Visiting Team commends Eastmont Middle School for the sharp learning curve the school has chosen to ascend in the last year and a half in order to create a strong, positive learning environment where collegiality is respected, students are the priority, and research-based, best instructional strategies (encouraged by professional development) are emerging in the classrooms. The Visiting Team encourages the continuation of this process.
- The Visiting Team commends the administrators—especially the principal—for their positive, active vision, which has revitalized the staff, community, and students and has helped restore Eastmont Middle School to a position of prominence.

• The Visiting Team commends and recognizes the teachers for giving so much of their time, and for and stretching themselves, through the accreditation process, to focus on student learning and create learning communities through which professional development may be utilized to the fullest.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Eastmont Middle School faculty and staff continue to work *collaboratively* within departments to create learning communities and begin cross-curricular connections to increase academic relevancy for all students.
- The Visiting Team recommends that professional development continue to be a focus for the school, in order to make use of the strong talents and expert abilities found within the administration, faculty, and staff at Eastmont Middle School. The expanded use of professional learning communities and resources within the school will greatly enhance instructional strategies in the classroom.
- The Visiting Team recommends that teachers continue with the creation of school-wide and departmental standards, which will govern the development of alternative classroom assessment tools. Such tools will help with the placement of students in appropriate classes, diagnose areas of student strength and weakness, ensure clarity and understanding of the desired results for student learning, and analyze the effectiveness and appropriateness of classroom instruction.